



# STATE SENATOR **Wayne Kuipers**

## 30TH SENATE DISTRICT E-MAIL UPDATE



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### **Senator Kuipers Passes Statewide Graduation Requirements**

The Senate recently approved Senate Bill (SB) 1124, which will put Michigan at the forefront of efforts to create rigorous statewide high-school graduation requirements so young people leave school ready for the 21<sup>st</sup> century job market.

The legislation would require students to take four years, or equivalent credit, of English and math; three of science and social studies; and one year of an arts course as well as a health and physical-education course. Additionally, students would have to take biology, geometry and Algebra I and II, among other specific course requirements.

In one key difference from the House plan, senators backed a two-year foreign-language requirement that could be fulfilled anytime between kindergarten and graduation. Differences between the House and Senate versions have yet to be negotiated.

### **Senate Votes to Save State Parks**

Legislation designed to protect Michigan's state parks has been unanimously approved by the Michigan Senate. Senate Bill (SB) 971 would prevent the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) from selling a state park and any specially-designated natural or wilderness area - making it a special act requiring approval from the Legislature. Currently, there is no provision in state law requiring legislative review of any proposal to sell a state park or a natural or wilderness area.

The legislation would also require the State Park Advisory Committee study any DNR proposal to sell a state park. In addition, the DNR would be required to hold a public hearing in the vicinity of the park prior to proposing a sale. Similarly, SB 972 would prevent the DNR from designating state park land as "surplus land" without specific legislative approval. Under current Michigan law, the DNR is allowed to declare any land it owns as surplus land and put it up for sale. SBs 971 and 972 will now go to the House of Representatives for consideration.

### **GOP Senators Nix Onerous Jobs Tax**

The State Senate has voted to repeal the jobs tax on December 31, 2007. House Bill 5743 was amended by the Senate to prohibit the Legislature from replacing what is known as the Single Business Tax (SBT) with an increase in the rate or base of taxes on individuals, including the income tax, sales tax, use tax, or real estate taxes on residences. Another Senate amendment requires the Governor's Council of Economic Advisors to develop a plan by January 1, 2007 to replace the SBT with fair business taxes that promote job creation, investment and economic growth.

The uniquely burdensome jobs tax even has drawn the scorn of the internationally read newspaper, *The Wall Street Journal*, whose editorial page wrote in December 2005: "How many more Michigan companies have to file for Chapter 11 or flee the state before the politicians in Lansing get serious about a growth agenda? Step one should be to speed up the elimination of the state's single business tax. ... Michigan has the fifth highest business tax burden in the country, and it is the only state to levy a tax on business production."